

Customer Success Story:

University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine



Higher Education | Foreign Language Skill Development



Building Critical Skills for Success

Challenge

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM) wanted a language-learning solution to build critical communication skills for medical students enrolled in the MD degree program. The need for Spanish language training increased for the school with the growth of the Spanish-speaking patient population in US clinical sites where students train and ultimately practice medicine. UPSOM sought a flexible online solution that could be part of a larger program that provided classroom language instruction in Spanish. In addition, an expanded international footprint significantly impacted the need for language-learning skill development in languages other than Spanish over the past 10 years. For these languages not offered in the classroom, UPSOM looked for an effective independent-study program giving learners anywhere, anytime access to build critical language skills. Although the language departments at the university offered courses in all required languages, the school needed a flexible solution that could complement the unpredictable schedules of students. Last, the school sought a program that could help on-board new students to build and/or reinforce language skills in the months prior to attending classroom language instruction.

Implementation

UPSOM implemented the Rosetta Stone® Foundations for Higher Education solution (formerly TOTALe® PRO) beginning in the summer of 2011. Language Lessons (formerly Rosetta Course®) provided students the opportunity to strengthen language skills. Students were also given the opportunity to reinforce and practice their language skills in the online social environments of Live Tutoring sessions as well as Games and Activities (formerly Rosetta Studio® and Rosetta World®). Time on task with the program varied depending on learner requirements. Accounts were closely monitored to assign licenses to learners with the greatest need. Licenses were reassigned to new learners once learning objectives were achieved. Learner progress was monitored and managed through Administrator Tools (formerly Rosetta Stone Manager™).

Benefits

- Students were able to successfully communicate with patients domestically, and with colleagues during international experiences.
- UPSOM realized over a 160% return on investment (ROI)
- The Rosetta Stone solution complemented unpredictable schedules
- The program supported student success with blended classroom instruction

"The Rosetta Stone program provided a flexible solution to build skills to meet the language-learning needs of a wide range of students through an asynchronous, anytime, anywhere platform."

John F. Mahoney, MD
Associate Dean for
Medical Education,
University of Pittsburgh
School of Medicine

Skills For The Clinical Setting

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine offered the Rosetta Stone® Foundations solution to students enrolled in the medical program to build necessary skills for success in the field. With over two years of a student's curriculum focused on clinical fieldwork, Spanish language skills were valuable for success in domestic clinics, due to an increase in Hispanic patients over the past decade. In addition, with the growth of international partnerships, the school has utilized the Rosetta Stone solution to provide valuable language-skill development in languages not taught in the classroom; this has been invaluable during educational experiences outside the United States. With a focus on oral-communication skills, learners utilized proprietary speech-recognition technology in the Rosetta Stone solution to gain the confidence to start conversations and keep them going in the language learned.

Structuring For Success

UPSOM has traditionally offered language courses in the medical school focusing primarily on Spanish. The Rosetta Stone solution was used to supplement the classroom by reinforcing foundational language skills. With the growth in global presence and study-abroad programs, the school utilized the solution to teach languages that lacked classroom support. Through independent study with the Rosetta Stone solution, students were able to build core language skills in Italian, French, Tagalog, and Chinese. The Rosetta Stone solution prepared students to study the target language on their own and at their own pace. The skills they acquired allowed them to have conversations upon arrival and to quickly acquire additional language while deployed in-country.

Offering Flexibility

The Rosetta Stone solution provided UPSOM the flexibility required to meet the language-learning needs of students. Dr. John Mahoney, associate dean for medical education, stated, "As our students head off to international experiences, the Rosetta Stone program has provided on-demand language study without the administrative burdens associated with arranging for an instructor or scheduling a course. It removed the barriers to providing medical students with language instruction." Traditional classroom instruction at the university couldn't accommodate the scheduling demands of students. The school needed a solution that could be delivered on demand, around the clock. "The Rosetta Stone solution provided a flexible solution to build skills to meet the language-learning needs of a wide range of students through an asynchronous, anytime, anywhere platform," stated Mahoney. Through effective use of Administrator Tools, the school was able to assign licenses based on student needs. Once students completed study, licenses were reassigned to new students. UPSOM also used the program to bring Spanish-language learners on board. Allowing them to have access to the Rosetta Stone solution the semester prior to participating in classroom instruction gave students the opportunity to build and/or reinforce core language skills.

Preparing For The Field

UPSOM medical students spend over two years of the academic program in clinical experiences with patients. Initially, these experiences are at clinics in close proximity to the university. Among the non-English-speaking patients encountered, the majority are native speakers of Spanish. To prepare students to serve this growing community, the school has created an immersion-based, blended-learning program consisting of classroom instruction along with using the Rosetta Stone solution to build and/or refresh language skills. In this environment, the classroom curriculum focused on building medical-specific vocabulary to add to language structures already learned. In addition, students converse with bilingual faculty physicians, and they role-play patients in highly practical simulations that emulate what will be encountered in clinical practice.

Realizing Benefits

UPSOM was able to build critical communication skills that allowed students to effectively consult patients in the field. Utilizing speech-recognition technologies in the program, students gained the confidence to speak their new language and easily engage in conversations. The school also was able to leverage the Rosetta Stone solution to meet the unpredictable schedules of students. Through the asynchronous-delivery platform, learners were able to access the program outside traditional classroom hours. In addition, the school was able to reassign licenses throughout the year, realizing a return on language-learning investment of over 160%.



About UPSOM

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine educates physicians who are science-based, skilled, and compassionate clinicians prepared to meet the challenges of practicing medicine in the 21st century, and educates investigators who are prepared to conduct cutting-edge biomedical research focused on bettering the human condition and advancing the fundamental understanding of medical science.

[▶ medschool.pitt.edu/](https://medschool.pitt.edu/)

About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and entire organizations.

Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 education institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.

